

Message Text

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SUBJ: CERP 0008 - EVALUATION OF UN ASSISTANCE.

REF: STATE 072386

A. ROLE OF UNDP IN UN DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM: THE NEW UNDP RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE (RR), MR. PIERRE DEMEBAAS, ARRIVED IN MONTEVIDEO ON MARCH 2, 1976 SO IT IS TOO SOON TO MAKE ANY SPECIFIC COMMENTS REGARDING HIS PERFORMANCE. NEVERTHELESS, DURING THE PAST YEAR, UNDER THE DIRECTION OF HIS PREDECESSOR, DR. LUIS GOMEZ, THE UNDP CONTINUED TO PROVIDE A VERY EFFECTIVE LEVEL OF LEADERSHIP TO ALL UNDP ACTIVITIES IN URUGUAY AND ITS RELATIONS WITH GOU MINISTRIES
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AND AGENCIES ARE CLOSE AND COOPERATIVE AS REPORTED IN LAST YEAR'S

EVALUATION.

RR'S OFFICE MAINTAINS A FIRM CONTROL OR VIGILANCE OF ALL UNDP ACTIVITIES. CASES OF UN AGENCIES BYPASSING THE RR'S OFFICE ARE NOT KNOWN TO THIS MISSION. THIS OFFICE CONTINUES REPRESENTING THE "UN" SYSTEM IN GENERAL AND SERVING AS ITS DIPLOMATIC CHANNEL BEFORE THE GOU FOREIGN OFFICE. UNDP AND IBRD HAVE ESTABLISHED AN EFFECTIVE WORKING RELATIONSHIP AND ACTIVITIES ARE WELL COORDINATED AND COMPLEMENTARY. THE UNDP HAS CONTINUED FINANCING THE TWO PRE-INVESTMENT PROJECTS IN AGRICULTURAL DIVERSIFICATION AND TRANSPORTATION (US \$650,000), FOR WHICH THE IBRD IS SERVING AS EXECUTING AGENCY UTILIZING PRIVATE CONSULTING FIRMS. THE IDEA OF HAVING THE SPECIALIZED AGENCY REPRESENTATIVES ATTACHED TO THE UNDP RR'S STAFF APPEARS TO BE USEFUL FOR IMPROVING THE COORDINATION, MANAGEMENT AND ECONOMY OF UN ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS IN THE FIELD. SUCH A PROCEDURE IS OPERATIVE IN URUGUAY IN RESPECT TO THE FAO REPRESENTATIVE AND APPEARS TO WORK SMOOTHLY.

B. COORDINATION OF ALL EXTERNAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: GOU OFFICE OF PLANNING AND BUDGET (OPP) CONTINUES TO PROVIDE A USEFUL MECHANISM FOR COORDINATING ALL EXTERNAL ASSISTANCE IN ORDER TO ENSURE AN OPTIMUM UTILIZATION OF MULTILATERAL AND BILATERAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE RESOURCES. THE UNDP OFFICE PREPARES AN ANNUAL COMPENDIUM OF EXTERNAL MULTILATERAL AND BILATERAL ASSISTANCE IN URUGUAY AND ALSO ORGANIZES PERIODIC COORDINATION MEETINGS AMONG EXTERNAL ASSISTANCE DONORS, WHERE THEIR RESPECTIVE ACTIVITIES AND COORDINATION MATTERS ARE DISCUSSED. ON OCCASIONS, THE GROUP ALSO MEETS WITH OPP OFFICIALS. THIS INFORMAL COORDINATION MECHANISM IS WORKING QUITE SATISFACTORILY AND IF OTHER GOVERNMENTS EXPAND THEIR BILATERAL ASSISTANCE ACTIVITIES IN URUGUAY, THEY MAY BE INCLUDED IN FUTURE MEETINGS.

C. BUDGETARY CONSTRAINTS: THE IMPACT OF BUDGETARY CONSTRAINTS ON UNDP ACTIVITIES DURING THIS FINAL YEAR OF THE FIRST PROGRAM CYCLE HAS NOT BEEN SERIOUS IN URUGUAY. ONLY SOME SECOND PRIORITY PROJECTS HAVE BEEN POSTPONED. NO MAJOR PLANNED ACTIVITIES HAD TO BE CANCELLED FOR BUDGETARY REASONS. THIS WAS DUE TO THE FACT THAT UNDP/URUGUAY WAS AWARE AT AN EARLY STAGE OF INFLATIONARY TRENDS AND THE INEVITABILITY OF BUDGETARY CONSTRAINTS; THUS THEY WERE ABLE TO RE-PROGRAM THEIR ACTIVITIES IN ADVANCE IN SUCH WAYS AS TO MINIMIZE ANY ADVERSE EFFECTS. THE IMPACT ON THE NEW UNDP COUNTRY PROGRAM WILL BE QUITE NEGATIVE BECAUSE THE IPF FIGURE FOR 1977-81 HAS NOT BEEN INCREASED OVER THE ORIGINAL PROGRAM.

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THIS WILL MEAN THAT FOR THE SAME DOLLAR AMOUNT (\$10. MILLION), LESS ASSISTANCE WILL BE PROVIDED. THIS IS AN UNHAPPY SITUATION, CONSIDERING THAT THE COUNTRY IS JUST NOW GEARING UP FOR GREATER ABSORPTION OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND ALSO BECAUSE USAID IS PLANNING A PHASE-OUT OF ITS GRANT TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE WHILE CONCENTRATING ON IMPLEMENTATION OF ON-GOING AGRICULTURAL LOANS. (NO NEW AID GRANT TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROJECTS HAVE BEEN APPROVED AFTER FY 1976.) UP TO NOW UNDP AND USAID HAVE BEEN THE MAIN

SOURCES OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO THE GOU. IN LIGHT OF THE USAID PLANS, UNDP WILL BECOME THE MOST IMPORTANT REMAINING SOURCE OF GRANT TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE. AS THE URUGUAYAN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS ADVANCES, THE GOU TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE NEEDS IN A VARIETY OF AREAS WILL BECOME GREATER. THE GOU MIGHT BE ABLE TO SATISFY PARTIALLY THIS DEMAND THROUGH LOAN-FINANCED TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, BUT THE BULK OF IT WILL HAVE TO BE PROVIDED PRIMARILY BY UNDP. FOR THESE REASONS, MISSION BELIEVES CONSIDERATION SHOULD BE GIVEN IN EXPANDING THE FUTURE UNDP CONTRIBUTIONS IN URUGUAY TO COMPENSATE FOR EXPANDED NEEDS AND PHASE-OUT OF THE AID PROGRAM.

D. NEW COUNTRY PROGRAMMING: THE SCHEDULE FOR THE PREPARATION OF THE COUNTRY PROGRAM FOR 1977-81 PERIOD IS AS FOLLOWS: APRIL 1976: PRELIMINARY CONVERSATIONS BETWEEN UNDP AND GOU; MAY 1976: UNDP/GOU WORK ON METHODOLOGY TO BE USED PREPARING THE COUNTRY PROGRAM DOCUMENT; JUNE 1976: START PREPARATION FOR THE FINAL COUNTRY PROGRAM DOCUMENT; JUNE 1977: SUBMISSION TO UNDP HEAD-QUARTERS. THE UNDP AND GOU ARE PLANNING TO PREPARE THE COUNTRY PROGRAM WITH A MORE SECTORAL APPROACH THAN IN THE PAST.

E. PROJECT EVALUATION AND IMPLEMENTATION: THE UNDP TRIPARTITE REVIEW SYSTEM IS EFFECTIVE IN RESOLVING PROBLEMS CONCERNED WITH PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION.

MISSION CONSIDERS THE CIVIL SERVICE PROJECT NO. URU/70/511, THE EXPORT PROMOTION PROJECT NO. URU/71/52, QUALITY CONTROL DEPARTMENT FOR LEATHER AND LEATHER PRODUCTS, PROJECT NO. URU/71/521, INSTITUTIONAL ORGANIZATION OF INDUSTRIAL SERVICES PROJECT NO. URU/72/013 AND AGRICULTURAL DIVERSIFICATION STUDIES URU/74/022 TO BE HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL IN TERMS OF FULFILLMENT OF PROJECT OBJECTIVES AND OUTPUTS. ON THE OTHER HAND, FACULTY OF AGRONOMY PROJECT NO. URU/65/5020 WHICH WAS REPORTED AS A WEAK PROJECT IN LAST YEAR'S EVALUATION HAS NOW BEEN RE-DESIGNED BY A HIGH-LEVEL SHORT-TERM CONSULTANT CONTRACTED FOR THAT PURPOSE. THE RE-DESIGNED PROJECT HAS BEEN RECENTLY APPROVED BY THE UNDP AND GOU AND WILL START OPERATING ONCE IT IS APPROVED BY UNDP

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HEADQUARTERS IN JULY 1976 FOR A FURTHER PERIOD OF THREE YEARS.

OUR GENERAL IMPRESSION IS THAT THE ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT FOR UNDP AND EXECUTING AGENCIES LACKS AGILITY IN MEETING COMMITMENTS ON TIME IN IMPLEMENTING PROJECTS. ALTHOUGH THE UNDP COMPLIES WITH ITS COMMITMENTS TO SEND EXPERTS, EQUIPMENT AND TO FINANCE PARTICIPANTS, THE ARRIVAL OF EXPERTS AND EQUIPMENT IN GENERAL IS OFTEN DELAYED AND MANY PROBLEMS ARISE IN MANAGING PARTICIPANTS. SUCH DELAYS AND INADEQUATE PROGRAM SUPPORT ADVERSELY AFFECT MORALE, PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULES, INCREASE COSTS, AND STRAIN RELATIONS WITH RECIPIENT URUGUAYAN AGENCIES. IN ADDITION, SERIOUS DELAYS ARE EXPERIENCED IN RECEIVING FINAL PROJECT REPORTS FROM EXECUTING AGENCIES ON TERMINATION OF PROJECT.

F. APPRAISAL OF PROPOSED PROJECTS: UNDP/USAID LIAISON CONTINUES TO BE CLOSE AND COOPERATIVE FOR PURPOSE OF ENSURING

MAXIMUM COOPERATION AND CONSULTATION IN FORMULATION OF NEW UNDP PROJECTS. AS REPORTED IN LAST YEAR'S EVALUATION, PROJECT PROPOSALS AND/OR IMPORTANT CHANGES IN APPROVED PROGRAMS ARE DISCUSSED WITH THE MISSION.

G. WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT: THE POSITION OF THE GOU ON WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL YEAR, PROCLAIMED BY THE UN LAST YEAR, WAS CLEARLY STATED BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE GOU (SE MVD A-26). IN HIS SPEECH, THE PRESIDENT EXPRESSED HIS SERIOUS CONCERN AND DISAGREEMENT WITH SEVERAL DOCTRINARY BASES ON WHICH THE UN BASED THE CELEBRATION OF WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL YEAR. NEVERTHELESS, UNDP/UNICEF ARE ASSISTING THE GOU IN ORGANIZING A SEMINAR ON CHILDHOOD, YOUTH AND FAMILY, TO BE HELD NEXT JUNE WITH SPECIAL ATTENTION TO THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THAT FIELD.

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